

IR power plant among 50 worst in the nation

By Rachel Swick

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A new report from a national environmental advocacy group lists Millsboro's Indian River Power Plant among the 50 worst polluters nationwide.

Released Thursday, July 27, by the Environmental Integrity Project (EIP), the report used publicly available information to rank nearly 400 power plants. Indian River Power Plant ranks 34th of the nation's 50 worst polluters.

"Power plants provide electricity for our homes, businesses and factories. But they also foul America's air with dangerous pollution," reports the Washington, D.C. based EIP. "Each year, power plants emit millions of tons of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, pollutants that trigger asthma attacks and contribute to lung and heart disease."

The entire report can be found at <http://www.dirtykilowatts.org>.

Indian River

The Indian River Power Plant, owned by NRG Energy, released a total of 68 million pounds of "criteria air pollutants" last year. The criteria air pollutants are nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide, volatile organic compounds, carbon dioxide and particles, said Alan Muller of Green Delaware.

On an average day, Indian River releases 186,000 pounds of these pollutants. The report was based only on nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide, carbon dioxide and mercury emissions reports. Carbon dioxide is a leading contributor to global warming, but is not regulated on a federal level, said Muller.

"These emissions, in my opinion, directly damage human health," said Muller. "For comparison, the Edge Moor Power Plant puts out about half this much and the Delaware City Refinery about equals the two power plants together."

Citizens action groups, including Green Delaware, the Audubon Society, the Sierra Club and Lewes-based Citizens for Clean Power have been taking part in a state regulatory process that could provide stricter regulations for power plant emissions.

"In response to new federal air-quality standards to take effect in 2007, DNREC (Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control) has initiated regulatory proceedings to reduce air pollution involving Delaware's two worst air polluters," said John Austin of CCP, referring to the Edge Moor plant in Wilmington and Indian River Power Plant in Sussex County.

On Wednesday, Aug. 2, the CCP will gather in front of the University of Delaware's Carvel building in Georgetown to speak to the public about power plant emissions and the problems that arise from them, such as polluted air leading to smog and health risks such as respiratory illnesses.

"CCP believes that Delaware can do better to protect the health of Delawareans by enacting stringent standards for the old power plants and following the lead of our neighboring states, New Jersey and Maryland, in protecting the public over protecting the owners of the power plant," said Bill Zak of CCP.

For more information about CCP, call Bill or Kit Zak at 644-2293. For more information about Green Delaware, contact Alan Muller at amuller@dca.net.